

1           WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

2    1. A data storage and retrieval system, comprising:  
3           a hosting environment having one or more different applications running on one or  
4           more servers at the hosting environment that allows a remote computing device to access  
5           data stored at the hosting environment immaterial of whether a particular application for  
6           accessing the data is installed on the remote computing device.

1    2. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 1, wherein the hosting environment  
2           includes a first network that provides access to the data from a remote computing device, a  
3           second network that enables interface connectivity between the hosting environment and the  
4           remote computing device, a third network that manages and maintains the data at the hosting  
5           environment, and a fourth network that controls the operation of the different networks in the  
6           hosting environment.

1    3. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 2, wherein the first network includes one or  
2           more terminal servers that provides access to the data stored at the hosting environment from  
3           a remote computing device.

1    4. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 3, wherein the terminal servers include a  
2           virtual desktop application that enables a remote computing device to access a virtual  
3           computing environment at the hosting environment and retrieve the data stored thereat.

1    5. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 4, wherein the terminal servers further  
2           include a virtual server application that provides a communications interface amongst the  
3           networks in the hosting environment.

1    6. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 3, wherein the first network is accessible via  
2           a virtual private network.

1    7. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 3, wherein the first network is accessible  
2           directly via the Internet.

1    8. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 2, wherein the second network includes one  
2           or more front-end servers for communicating with the remote computing device.

1       9. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 2, wherein the third network includes one or  
2       more file servers for storing the data at the hosting environment.

1       10. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 9, wherein the third network further  
2       includes one or more mail servers for managing e-mail communication via the hosting  
3       environment.

1       11. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 9, wherein the file servers are clustered.

1       12. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 9, wherein the third network is accessible  
2       via a virtual private network.

1       13. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 10, wherein the mail server enables a  
2       globally accessible, secure messaging environment that can be accessed by the remote  
3       computing device.

1       14. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 2, wherein the fourth network includes one  
2       or more intranet servers that manages the remote accesses to the data stored at the hosting  
3       environment.

1       15. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 1, wherein the computing device is a  
2       personal computer.

1       16. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 1, wherein the computing device is a  
2       personal data assistant (PDA) device.

1       17. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 1, wherein the computing device includes  
2       a web browser application for accessing the data stored at the hosting environment.

1       18. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 1, wherein the data is synchronized  
2       between the computing device and the hosting environment.

1       19. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 18, wherein the synchronization of the  
2       data occurs automatically.

- 1 20. A data storage and retrieval system, comprising:
  - 2 a hosting environment having one or more different applications running on one or
  - 3 more servers at the hosting environment, wherein data from a remote computing device is
  - 4 stored at the hosting environment for subsequent retrieval of the data, such that
  - 5 synchronization of the data between the remote computing device and the hosting
  - 6 environment occurs at frequent intervals.
  
- 1 21. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 20, wherein the hosting environment
- 2 includes one or more terminal servers that provides access to the data stored at the hosting
- 3 environment from a remote computing device.
  
- 1 22. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 21, wherein the terminal servers include a
- 2 virtual desktop application that enables a remote computing device to access a virtual
- 3 computing environment at the hosting environment and retrieve the data stored thereat.
  
- 1 23. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 20, wherein the hosting environment is
- 2 accessible directly via the Internet using a web browser application.
  
- 1 24. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 21, wherein the hosting environment
- 2 further includes one or more file servers for storing the data at the hosting environment.
  
- 1 25. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 24, wherein the file servers are clustered.
  
- 1 26. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 20, wherein the computing device is a
- 2 personal computer.
  
- 1 27. The data storage and retrieval system of Claim 20, wherein the computing device is a
- 2 personal data assistant (PDA) device.
  
- 1 28. A data storage and retrieval method, comprising the steps of:
  - 2 comparing each document on a computing device that is intended to be synchronized
  - 3 with the documents presently stored at a hosting environment to determine whether any of the
  - 4 documents stored on the remote computing device need to be replicated at the hosting
  - 5 environment;

6           if a document on the computing device that is intended to be synchronized is not also  
7    stored at the hosting environment, replicating the document at the hosting environment such  
8    that the same version of the document exists on the computing device and at the hosting  
9    environment;

10           if a document on the computing device that is intended to be synchronized is stored at  
11    the hosting environment, but the data in the document stored on the computing device is  
12    different from the data in the document stored at the hosting environment, and the document  
13    stored on the computing device contains a more recent version of the data, replicating the  
14    document at the hosting environment such that the same version of the document exists on  
15    the computing device and at the hosting environment;

16           if a document on the computing device that is intended to be synchronized is stored at  
17    the hosting environment, but the data in the document stored at the hosting environment is  
18    different from the data in the document stored on the computing device, and the document  
19    stored at the hosting environment contains a more recent version of the data, replicating the  
20    document on the computing device such that the same version of the document exists on the  
21    computing device and at the hosting environment;

22           if a document on the computing device that is intended to be synchronized is not stored  
23    at the hosting environment, replicating the document at the hosting environment such that the  
24    same version of the document exists on the computing device and at the hosting environment;

25           if a document at the hosting environment no longer exists on the computing device,  
26    deleting the document from the hosting environment;

27           synchronizing the documents between the computing device and the hosting  
28    environment; and

29           providing a virtual desktop interface for remotely accessing the documents stored at  
30    the hosting environment with the computing device by interacting with a virtual desktop  
31    workspace, whereby the documents can be remotely accessed regardless of whether the  
32    computing device includes an appropriate application for accessing the documents.

1    29. The method of Claim 28, wherein the documents include any of data files or file folders  
2    containing one or more data files therein.

1    30. The method of Claim 28, wherein synchronization occurs automatically in accordance with  
2    a predetermined time schedule.

1       31. The method of Claim 28, wherein the computing device includes any of a personal  
2       computer, a personal data assistant (PDA) device, and a cellular telephone.